

MEMO TO THE FILE:

Call with MPCA

March 8, 2022

CALL NOTES:

Birch Lake (69-0003-00):

+ MPCA isn't opposed to listing Birch Lake, the current hurdle is the existing water quality data isn't there to list Birch Lake.

Q: Has MPCA considered this sulfate data from Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness?

MPCA Response: Yes, MPCA has looked at this data. MPCA considered it a few months back

+ Ideally, sampling information would be provided which covers a longer snapshot in time. E.g., once a month for 5-6 months in a row/samples collected throughout a year time period

+ If someone provides 8 samples all taken within a week, MPCA is going to group those samples together and they won't be indicative of conditions across a longer timeframe. Also, targeted sampling in a short time window isn't going to meet the criteria of 5 samples

+ MPCA also shared that some of the locational information doesn't always align with existing locations

+ There may be locational error in certain cases.

+ The location data for all of these sampling points, don't always align with the MPCA Map of sampling locations.

+ MPCA prefers that water quality data submitted from outside parties has to go to the EQUIS portal, outside data has to be ready for EQUIS for MPCA to consider it for assessments.

+ Submitting water quality data in a spreadsheet attached to a comment requires a lot of work on MPCA's end to verify the data, to QA/QC the data, to determine the locational components of the data, etc. It is best for outside parties to submit it through EQUIS portal

+ Yes, MPCA acknowledges that there are certain hurdles to get water quality data prepped for EQUIS submittal...but certain MN tribes have figured out how to submit data through the portal

+ MPCA has to treat sulfate like every other parameter. Sulfate can't be given special treatment because outside parties want sulfate to be fast-tracked or bypass certain QA/QC methods which MPCA has employed for many years

+ MPCA is very sensitive about data, regardless of whether we are talking about sulfate, E. coli, nutrients, etc.

+ MPCA cannot put themselves in a position of not having done their due diligence on water quality data. All water quality data which is deemed worthy of assessment, has to go through this process.

+ MPCA's procedures...Let's get the data in EQUIS, make sure it is appropriate and all the boxes have been checked for its validity, then, given the timing circumstances, MPCA will assess it for the next listing cycle

+ It needs to go through all the same QA/QC process that everyone else does.